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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of programs on sexism in reading materials, that were part of four Title IX workshops held in various areas of Rhode Island. Principals, teachers, counselors, and guidance directors were invited to the workshops. The session on sex-role stereotyping in reading materials consisted of a 40-minute oral presentation documented with facts and figures and illustrated with examples found in reading materials used in schools in the area. Ideas for counteracting bias were discussed. The goals of the workshop included awareness and action; the questionnaire included items to measure change or growth in both areas. From the responses, the workshops were found to be effective in creating awareness of sex-role stereotyping in reading materials and in school practices. A high percentage of the respondents felt they were more aware of sex-role stereotyping in instructional materials and practices after attending the workshop. (MB)

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CS 003 545

An Investigation into the Efficacy of Work-Shops on Sex-Role Stereotyping in Reading Materials

In response to Title 9 Lesislation and the spirit of the day that loudly proclaims--Sexism Beware, many workshops have been given on sex stereotyping in the schools. However, little research has been done to substantiate whether these programs have been effective in changing attitudes or actions.

The following study was done to attempt to determine the effect of programs on sexism in reading materials that were part of four Title 9 workshops that were held in various areas of Rhode Island. Principals, teachers, counselors and guidance directors were invited to attend these all-day sessions. Attendance was completely voluntary--no remuneration was given and even lunch was not provided.

The session on sex-role stereotyping in reading materials consisted of a forty minute oral presentation documented with facts and figures and illustrated with actual examples of sex-role stereotyping in reading materials used in schools in the area. Ideas for counteracting this bias were discussed. A handout with specific suggestions for elimination of stereotyping and a bibliography of informational source was given to each participant. Time was alloted for questions and answers.

Two months after the completion of the workshops, the following questionnaire was sent to each participant along with an appropriate cover letter and a stamped self-addressed envelope. As the anonymity of each respondent was assured, it was impossible to send follow-up letters. Sixty two percent of the 63 participants responded.

Survey of Effectiveness of SEGO Workshop
on Sex-role Stereotyping in Instructional Materials

Position_____

Workshop location_____

1. Since attending the workshop have you been aware of sex-role stereotyping in reading materials? Yes___ No___

2. Have you noticed any examples of sex-role stereotyping in reading materials at your school? Yes___ No___

3. Have you made an attempt to remove materials with sex-role stereotyping from your school? Yes___ No___

4. Have you tried to compensate for any existing sex bias by making verbal comments or questioning students as to their perceptions? Yes___ No___

5. Have you brought to use books and materials in your school that do not have sex-role stereotypes? Yes___ No___

6. Have you recently served on a textbook selection committee? Yes___ No___

   If so, did you make an attempt to select materials that did not have sex-role stereotyping? Yes___ No___

7. Have you suggested books without sex-role stereotypes for your school librarian to order? Yes___ No___

8. Have you written to a publisher about any specific examples of sex-role stereotyping? Yes___ No___

9. Have you shared any insights from this workshop with other staff members? Yes___ No___

10. Have you been more aware of certain practices that reinforce sex-role stereotyping? Yes___ No___

    If so, have you tried to eliminate these practices? Yes___ No___

11. Have you ordered or read any of the materials that were listed on the bibliography? Yes___ No___

12. Was the workshop meaningful to you? Yes___ No___

13. Additional comments you would like to make about the effectiveness of this workshop.

Since the goals of the workshop included both awareness and action the questionnaire included items to measure change or growth in both areas. Items 1, 2, and 10a attempted to evaluate increased awareness of sex-role stereotyping and items 3, 4, 5, 6b, 7, 8, 9, 10b and 11 were concerned with changed behavior.

It can be seen from the responses to questions 1, 2, and 10a (Table 1) that the workshops were effective in creating an awareness of sex-role stereotyping in reading materials and school practices. A high percentage of the respondents noted that they had been more aware of sex-role stereotyping in instructional materials and practices since attending the workshop.

Most of the participants had shared sights from the workshop with staff members at their schools and had tried to compensate for existing sex-role stereotyping by working with students and by trying to eliminate existing practices. Over 50% of the respondents had ordered or read materials listed on the bibliography and most felt that the workshop was meaningful to them.

However, few had made an attempt to remove material with sex-role stereotyping from the schools, brought in non-sexist books or materials, suggested non-biased materials to the school librarian, or written to a publisher about specific examples of sex-role stereotyping. Only two respondents had served on textbook selection committees but both of them made an attempt to select materials that did not have sex-role stereotypes.

The responses seemed to indicate an over-all increased awareness of sex-role stereotyping with a few active attempts to eliminate this bias on the part of those who responded to the survey. Seventeen respondents chose to make additional comments about the workshop. Most felt it was "interesting, informative, enlightening, worthwhile, arousing" and would like to see it offered again.

On the basis of the responses to this survey, it would seem that workshops on sex-role stereotyping in reading materials can be effective in creating

an awareness of bias and producing some action in eliminating this bias. Further research should be done to attempt to determine the long-range effectiveness of such programs.

Table I
Number and Percentages of Responses to Each
Item on Follow-up Questionnaire on Effectiveness of Workshops
on Sex-Role Stereotyping in Instructional Materials

Number of Questions	Yes Reponses Number	Yes Reponses Percentage of total Respondents	No Responses Number	No Responses Percentage of total Respondents	Inanswered Responses Number	Inanswered Responses Percentage of total Respondents
1	30	77%	7	18%	2	5%
2	23	59%	10	25%	6	15%
3	11	28%	24	62%	4	10%
4	33	85%	3	8%	3	8%
5	14	36%	21	54%	4	10%
6a	2	5%	35	90%	2	5%
6b*	2	100%	0	-	0	-
7	12	31%	23	59%	4	10%
8	2	5%	34	87%	3	8%
9a	38	97%	0	-	1	2%
9b*	22	58%	13	34%	3	7%
10a	35	90%	4	10%	0	-
10b*	31	89%	4	11%	0	-
11	20	51%	16	41%	3	8%
12	35	90%	2	5%	2	5%

*The starred (b) items are based on figures from the (a) items.